

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-5
March 20, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-5 [11:57:04 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City of Coral Gables, Florida providing for a preference to utilize Park Impact Fees for park acquisition unless such fees are otherwise earmarked for other park system improvements and providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The next item is H-5, preference to utilize Park Impact Fees for park acquisition.

City Attorney Ramos: H-5 is A Resolution of the City of Coral Gables, Florida providing for a preference to utilize Park Impact Fees for park acquisition unless such fees are otherwise earmarked for other park system improvements and providing for an effective date.

Commissioner Lago: Well, basically I put this on the agenda because I wanted to provide a little bit more clarity, because I know that certain people had questions in regard to where we were in the process and some of us weren't even here when this came up; and Miriam I know you put

together a quick synopsis, could you give a little bit more background in regards to where we are right now and where we stalled in the process.

City Attorney Ramos: About a year ago, there were a couple of discussions, at least three, regarding the Art in Public Places ordinance and using some of that money for parks with an incentive program and an additional percentage. It came to Commission three times and ultimately died. So that did not move forward. Commissioner Lago then asked if we could make Park Impact Fees for park acquisition a priority. We do have a new Park Impact Fee ordinance which included commercial properties, which increases the Park Impact Fee projected amount over the next ten years from, I believe, and Mr. Iglesias please correct me if I'm wrong, from \$18 million to \$21 million with commercial properties, and also our Park Impact Fee ordinance applies citywide, under the concept that parks are mobile. So, you could drive to a park in the southern part of the Gables even if you don't live there and use it and enjoy it; and so, that allows for obviously a larger amount of money and a broader use for those funds.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Can I say something here? - and I'm all for parks and acquisition of parks and everything, but we also have to maintain the parks that we have, and to the extent that this money needs to be used for maintenance of the parks that we have, I would like for us to have, for the City Manager to have that flexibility.

City Attorney Ramos: So, Park Impact Fees – no impact fees can be used for maintenance, but they can be used for additional improvements.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But, if the 40 year old park needs new pavers...

Commissioner Lago: Again, I don't have a problem with an improvement if we say, we take 10, 15, 20 percent of the monies and we add it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm sorry; I'm not talking about lawn mowing or the trees or whatever. I'm talking about improvements.

City Attorney Ramos: Improvements.

Commissioner Lago: Tangible improvements.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no, a fountain has deteriorated because it's been there 35 years, we need to refurbish it.

City Attorney Ramos: That may be right on the line, but if we needed to put in a playground like we just opened up...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: A playground, right.

Commissioner Lago: Correct me if I'm wrong, it's been such a long time since we've been talking about this. This has had multiple iterations. The whole purpose of this was to have, to go from one percent to one point five percent on impact fees, and we passed that resolution. So we have the monies. Now the issue was, it was a little ambiguous in regards to whether the developer or the entity in question that is coming before the City has to pay these fees, could divert those monies from being used for art or being used for park, I didn't want to have that discussion. I didn't want to raid the art piggy bank. I wanted to have that stand alone, but I also wanted to be able to provide just like the City of Miami and other municipalities, a fee for parks. We've all seen how incredibly successful how Betsy Adams Park has been. I get calls probably on a weekly basis or when I go to the park myself from residents that tell me, I want a park in my neighborhood. How did this happen? I can give you another example. I forgot the name and I apologize, the one in North Gables with the beautiful tree.

Vice Mayor Keon: Lisbon.

Commissioner Lago: Lisbon Park, thank you Vice Mayor. Everybody loves that park, it's a neighborhood park. It gets used probably on a daily basis. It's not as active as Betsy Adams Park, but that's just a special location. There are a lot of children in that area and people want to go to that open space. So the idea of parks, I agree with you wholeheartedly Mayor, I think that we need to have a little bit of a blend, but I want to be very careful how we use this money, because this money is an economic driver that over the next ten years is going to bear a lot of fruit; and right now, I think, and correct me if I'm wrong in the budget, I think we have \$300,000 allocated a year. We know that \$300,000 doesn't even buy a lot on Capri Street, 5,000 square feet. Homes right now, the median home values are \$850,000 in the City of Coral Gables. You can't even find empty lots anymore basically. So, I want to be very careful. I'm flexible on this issue, but I think this is a great opportunity and we also ran into an issue there where, remember one of the iterations was, OK, let's use this money for a downtown park and we couldn't do that, remember? - because...

Vice Mayor Keon: There had to be a nexus.

Commissioner Lago: There had to be a nexus, so that was abandoned also. So, I'm just bringing it back to codify this and really make sure that we have it in perpetuity that it goes for park

acquisition. If you want a number, a 10, 15, 20 percent, or whatever number you want to discuss for upgrades to existing parks, I'm fine. Let's find common ground.

Commissioner Mena: Yes, yes. I just want to make sure I understand exactly what it is you are asking for.

Commissioner Lago: But, \$300,000 is not going to cut it a year unless we are going to start raising the money.

Commissioner Mena: Agreed. Agreed. But, what's also not cutting in my view is the amount of money that we are allocating towards improving some of our major existing parks, as opposed to park acquisition. I've dealt with Fred a lot on this and sometimes he's a bit hamstrung; Betsy Adams is a great example, but there was a significant amount of money spent there to make that what it is.

Commissioner Lago: But, I thought we had a budget of a million and we didn't get, we paired it back a little bit, right?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We didn't have a budget of a million, but the bids came in at about \$1.2? - about a million.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Over \$900,000... [inaudible – off mic]...

Commissioner Lago: Yes – so we paired it back.

Commissioner Mena: Yes. So, I've been talking to Fred a lot on Kerdyk Park, I've had people reaching out to me about JAYCEE Park a lot, feeling like it needs an update; and a lot of times Fred is dealing with, at least I think in the case of Kerdyk, it was \$185,000, if I recall. What was the number you had budgeted? There is only so much you can do with that on a larger park to have what I think we should have, which is the best park elements in our major parks in the County. I have people tell me regularly who live off of Le Jeune, south of U.S.-1; I cross the street to Merry Christmas Park, because it's much nicer than the Gables side parks. We shouldn't have that. We need to have the best parks. So, I just want to be careful how we prioritize.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's not put a park in Coral Gables in front of Merry Christmas though.

Commissioner Mena: No, no, no, that's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is they don't go to JAYCEE Park, because they feel like that's a better park to take their kids.

Commissioner Lago: I just want to remind you, I know you weren't here, but when we voted on going from one percent to one point five, the purpose was for acquisition; and again, I don't have a problem of being flexible, but I think that the bulk of the monies that we raise on this fund, the total of \$21 million, I mean it should go to acquiring properties, because I think over the next ten years, we are getting more densely populated, it would be great to have more green space, because if you go to Betsy Adams, which I know you do, your mother-in-law lives a stone's throw away, so you drive through that area every day.

Commissioner Mena: It's great.

Commissioner Lago: Not only is it great, there is no room with the amount of people that are using it every single day. So, it would be great to be able to do something – that's a pretty big piece of property, I think we spent about a million dollars on that property, its two lots. It's going to be tough to find two lots that have corner to corner.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: It would be great to be able to facilitate that and offer something in the same vain to other areas of the City, especially areas that are in dire need of some sort of park in their neighborhood; and \$21 million dollars may sound like a lot of money, but prices are continuing to go up and I don't think we can get a lot of property for \$21 million.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We also have a Park Master Plan that is going to be in the process. We've asked the staff to do a map that shows where we are under open space, under parked; so that we can develop some type of priorities that I think will also be helpful in identifying where we should be focused on for park acquisition.

Commissioner Lago: So why don't we do this, if my colleagues will entertain this, why don't we table this for the next Commission meeting? Have Fred meet with staff, meet with me, meet with each one of us, and say listen, out of the \$21 million dollars that's coming in over the next ten years, by the way that's just not concrete, it's going to be in flux a little bit, maybe its \$20, maybe its \$22, \$19 (million), whatever that may be, let's take a percentage of that and use it for maintenance, not maintenance, upgrades of our most important projects that are in need.

Commissioner Mena: That's the only point I ask. I think that what I view at least as four of our major parks that right now could use is Kerdyk, Jaycee, Salvador and Youth Center, let's always

make sure that those are just where they need to be and where I think we all agree that we want to see them. That's all I'm asking for and I agree with what you just said.

Commissioner Lago: I don't have a problem. I don't have a problem. But let's do something where, maybe in a week is a little bit too tight, we can do the 10th or the 27th of April, so let's put together a plan, but just be cognizant of what I told you. Let's use some of the monies over the next ten years, give us a budget, but let's not raid the whole piggy bank, because....

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK.

City Attorney Ramos: Commissioner, you want to make a motion for deferral to a specific date?

Commissioner Lago: I make the motion. I guess we'll do it, does staff feel comfortable on the 10th or the 27th? Fred it's on you.

Mr. Couceyro: 27th.

Commissioner Lago: 27th.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: 27th of April.

Commissioner Lago: Of April.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. All those in favor say aye.

All: Aye.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Opposed. OK. We'll take a break until one o'clock.

Vice Mayor Keon: Can I ask one question before you go? I want to know, what are white goods on this paper that you gave out, what are white goods?

Commissioner Quesada: I noticed that as well.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: It's like dishwashers and hard junk, I believe is the discussion.

Vice Mayor Keon: OK. So, when you were talking about that earlier, they are not supposed to put that out unless they call to arrange for pickup.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We don't pick-up a refrigerator, except for special call in advance.

Vice Mayor Keon: But, does a couch and big furniture apply to white goods?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: No, that's a different term. So, I'll get clarification for you, but the idea like, if you have a refrigerator to dispose of, you need to call us in advance, we will give you a price for what that pickup is. It's not a...

[End: 12:07:52 p.m.]